

### Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

#### Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A mower deck bumper comprising first and second ends and a bend section between the first and second ends, at least the first end of the mower deck bumper being configured for mounting to a mower deck so as to position the bend section over at least a portion of a trim surface of the mower deck, the bend section being spaced apart from the trim surface when the mower deck bumper is in a rest state[[:]], wherein the mower deck bumper is configured to absorb forces when brought into contact with an object that moves the bend section towards the trim surface.
2. (previously presented) The mower deck bumper of claim 1, further comprising at least one aperture formed in the first end that is sized to receive a fastener for securing the first end of the mower deck bumper to the mower deck.
3. (original) The mower deck bumper of claim 1, wherein the first and second ends are configured for mounting the mower deck bumper to the mower deck.
4. (original) The mower deck bumper of claim 1, wherein the mower deck bumper comprises an ultra high molecular weight polyethylene (UHMW-PE) material.
5. (previously presented) A method of protecting an exposed surface of a mower deck with a mower deck bumper, the method comprising the steps of:  
forming the mower deck bumper with a bend section between first and second ends of the mower deck bumper; and  
securing at least one end of the mower deck bumper to the mower deck so as to position the bend section adjacent to and spaced apart from a trim surface of the mower deck, whereby the bend section is configured and arranged to engage objects in close proximity to the trim surface that would otherwise contact the trim surface and bend towards the trim surface upon contact with the objects.

Approved  
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(initials)